H Métraux E-5 (1934-1935) 1940
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2

My experiences with modern natives of Easter Island make me doubt the truth of this system of retaliation. Certainly the offended person would try to avenge the theft by any method possible, but it seems hardly probable that the thief would accept his punishment if he were the stronger.

At the present time, a robbed person may try to identify the thief and recover the lost property. A thief caught in the act of stealing is punished. Many natives now go to the Chilean Subdelegado to complain, although they know he can do little. The captain of the training ship, *Baquedano*, is the supreme authority to which the islanders appeal. He stays on the island only a few days and metes justice according to his temper or fancy.

VENGEANCE

Persons who felt deeply injured or unjustly treated were sometimes overwhelmed by madness (*heva*) which led them to commit the most daring deeds. A man or woman who yielded to this state of fury ate soil (*kai te oone*), ran to-and-fro with a rat in his mouth, and tried to harm those who had offended him. "I am eating soil" is still a common expression to indicate anger or spite. These crises were considered temporary diseases. If a person in this state of anger recited an appropriate charm, he might succeed in killing the person who had aroused his wrath. (See the legend of Raraku, p. 370.)

Revenge was the most usual incentive for wars and feuds. Many tales and legends of Easter Island are concerned with details of revenge (*ati te kopeka*) taken by lineages or tribes for the murder of one of their members. According to information given me by the natives, the family of the murdered tried to kill the murderer, but if they did not succeed, any other person belonging to the culprit's family was killed. The victim's father or some other relative resorted to a special priest called *timo-ika* (chanter of the corpse) who performed certain rites to cause the murderer to die. Every lineage or subtribe had many such priests who carried out all rituals for revenge. This did not prevent the injured party from waging war or pursuing the culprit. The corpse of the dead man was put on the ahu and the *timo-ika* chanted spells, at the same time brandishing a pallet (*rapa-ika*). My informant gave rhythmic and gutteral sounds which he pretended were an imitation of the *timo-ika's* chant. The only words he remembered were: *Oeo e hiva e*. From time to time the priest turned the body of the dead, an act supposed to be very harmful to the family or the entire group of the murderer.

The pallets used in the above ceremony were of wood or bone, oval, and provided with a short handle. Two *rapa-ika*, one made of wood and the other of whalebone, were purchased by Thomson (215, pl. 53, figs. 3-4). The wooden specimen had cracked and the two pieces were sewn together through small holes perforated along the break. The whalebone pallet is 30 inches long and 14 inches wide. It is decorated with the incised figures of two birds traced according to the style of the tablets.

1: Metraux E-5 (1934-1935) 1940
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2

628 754 The ceremony is still remembered by the natives and was well known to Salmon, who gave some information about it to Geiseler and Thomson. Geiseler (87, p. 28) says:

> Revenge was more frequent in days of old than it is now. The man claiming vengeance publicly challenged his enemy. For that he placed on his head a wig made of horsehair and made a loud noise by striking against each other a wooden and a bone pallet, and by singing continuously insulting and revengeful chants. The duels were fought with spears and clubs of various descriptions. Sometimes they killed the children of the offender from revenge.

672

237 301 628 A wig of horsehair (*rehau*) was collected by Geiseler and is now in the Museum für Völkerkunde, Berlin (VI 4978). This specimen is undoubtedly a curio without much ethnological value. The poor technique and the use of foreign material suggest that it was made after European contact. This wig does not differ greatly from those used by lovers who did not want to be recognized (p. 114). At the time of Geiseler's visit (1884) feuds were no longer fought and duels, in the strict sense of the word, are not referred to in traditions or legends of the island.

754 628 Thomson (215, p. 536) says the pallets were used "in working a charm against an enemy. The injured individual performing a sort of convulsive dance, makes mystic movements with the paddle meanwhile muttering incantations in a monotonous tone. The result is believed to be the speedy death of the person against whom the fetish is invoked." Valuable information about this has been published by Routledge (194, p. 229):

> Most elaborate spells were performed in connection with a man who had been slain, known as "tangata ika", or fish-man; the corpse was kept from resting either day or night while his neighbours went in pursuit of vengeance. In front of one *ahu*, on the north coast, some pieces of the old statues have been formed into a rude chair. On this, it was said, had been seated the naked body of a man belonging to the district, Kotavari-vari by name, who had been killed at Akahanga on the south coast. One man kept the corpse from falling, while two others sat behind and chanted songs to aid the avengers. These watchers were covered with black ashes, wore only feather hats, and carried the small dancing-paddle known as "rapa"; the chief man in charge of the ceremony was known as the "timo". It must have been an eerie scene as dusk came on. The story is told of a murder near Tongariki. In this case the victim's corpse was placed on the *ahu* and turned over at intervals by the watchers. Hanga Maihiko, a converted image *ahu* on the south coast, is one of those which have a paved approach, and there are on the pavement two stones—pieces of a hat and a statue—especially used for exposing "fish-men". If these charms failed to act, there was a still more reliable way. The clothes of the victim were buried beneath the cooking-place of the foe, and when he had partaken of food prepared there he would certainly die the night following. Some of the carved tablets were connected with these rites; one was certainly known as that of the "Ika", while there is said to have been another called "Timo", which was the "list" kept by each *ahu* of its murdered men.

Routledge is wrong when she translates *ika* as fish; this word means "slain person" and is a homonym of the word *ika* signifying "fish."